NUMB. LX.

The GUARDIAN.

Nihil legebat quod non excerperet. Plin. Epist.

Wednesday, May 20. 1713.

To NESTOR IRONSIDE, *Esq;*

SIR,

'THERE is nothing in which Men de-'ceive themselves more ridiculously, 'than in the Point of Reading, and 'which, as it's commonly practised, under the Notion of Improvement, has less Advantage. The generality of Readers, who are pleased with wandring over a number of Books almost at the same Instant, or if confined to one, who pursue the Author with much Hurry and Impatience to his last Page, must without doubt be allowed to be notable Digesters. This unsettled way of Reading, naturally seduces us into an undetermined manner of Thinking, which unprofitably fatigues the Imagination, when a continued Chain of Thought would probably produce inestimable Conclusions. All Authors are eligible either for their Matter or Stile; if for the first, the Elucidation and Disposition of it into proper Lights, ought to employ a judicious Reader; if for the last, he ought to observe how some common Words are started into a new Signification, how such Epithets are beautifully reconciled to things that seemed incompatible, and must often remember the whole Structure of Period, because by the least Transposition, that Assemblage of Words which is called a Stile, becomes utterly annihilated. The swift Dispatch of common Readers not only eludes their Memory, but betrays their Apprehension, when the Turn of Thought and Expression would insensibly grow natural to them, would they but give themselves time to receive the Impression. Suppose we fix one of these Readers in his easie Chair, and observe him passing thro' a Book with a grave ruminating Face, how ridiculously must he look, if we desire him to give an Account of an Author he has just read over, and how unheeded must the general Character of it be, when given by one of these Screne Unobservers? The common Defence of these People is, that they have no design in Reading but for Pleasure, which I think should rather arise from the Reflection and Remembrance of what one has read, than from the transient Satisfaction of what one does, and we should be pleased proportionably as we are profited. 'Tis prodigious Arrogance in any one to imagine, that by one hasty course thro' a Book he can fully enter into the Soul and Secrets of a Writer, whose Life perhaps has been busied in the Birth of such Production. Books that don't immediately concern some Profession or Science, are generally run over as meer empty Entertainments, rather than as matter of Improvement; though in my Opinion, a refined Speculation upon Morality, or History, requires as much Time and Capacity to collect and digest, as the most abstruse Treatise of any Profession; and I think besides, there can be no Book well written, but what must necessarily improve the Understanding of the Reader, even in the very Profession to which he applies himself. For to Reason with Strength, and express himself with Propriety, must equally concern the Divine, the Physician, and the Lawyer. My own course of looking into Books has occasioned these Reflections, and the following Account may suggest more.

'Having been bred up under a Relation that had a pretty large Study of Books, it became my Province once a Week to dust them. In the performance of this my Duty, as I was obliged to take down every particular Book, I thought there was no way to deceive the Toil of my Journey thro' the different Abodes and Habitations of these Authors, but by reading something in every one of them; and in this manner to make my Passage easie from the comely *Folio* in the upper Shelf or Region, even through the Crowd of *Duodecimo's* in the lower. By frequent Exercise I became so great a Proficient in this transitory Application to Books, that I could hold open half a dozen small Authors in an Hand, grasping them with as secure a dexterity as a Drawer does his Glasses, and feasting my curious Eye with all of them at the same Instant. Through these Methods the natural Irresolution of my Youth was much strengthened, and having no leisure, if I had had Inclination, to make pertinent Observations in Writing, I was thus confirmed a very early Wanderer. When I was sent to *Oxford* my chiefest Expence run upon Books, and my only

'Confi-

(Price Two Pence.)

'Conſideration in ſuch Expence upon Number, ſo 'that you may be ſure I had what they call a choice 'Collection, ſometimes buying by the Pound, ſome-'times by the dozen, at other times by the hundred. 'For the more pleaſant uſe of a multitude of Books, I 'had by frequent Conferences with an ingenious Joy-'ner, contrived a Machine of an orbicular Structure, 'that had its particular Receptions for a dozen Authors, 'and which, with the leaſt touch of the Finger, would 'whirl round and preſent the Reader at once with 'a delicious View of its full Furniture. Thrice a 'Day did I change, not only the Books but the Lan-'guages, and had ſtr'd my Eye to ſuch a quick Succeſ-'ſion of Objects, that in the moſt precipitate Twirl I 'could catch a Sentence out of each Author, as it 'paſſed fleeting by me. Thus my Hours, Days, and 'Years flew unprofitably away, but yet were agree-'ably lengthened by being diſtinguiſhed with this 'endearing Variety; and I can't but think my ſelf ve-'ry Fortunate in my Contrivance of this Engine, 'with its ſeveral new Editions and Amendments, 'which have contributed ſo much to the Delight of all 'ſtudious Vagabonds. When I had been Reſident 'the uſual time at *Oxford* that gains one Admiſſion 'into the publick Library, I was the happieſt Creature 'on Earth, promiſing to my ſelf moſt delightful 'Travels through this new World of Literature. 'Sometimes you might ſee me mounted upon a Lad-'der, in ſearch of ſome *Arabian* Manuſcripts, which 'had ſlept in a certain Corner undiſturbed for many 'Years. Once I had the Misfortune to fall from 'this Eminence, and catching at the Chains of the 'Books was ſeen hanging in a very merry Poſture, 'with two or three large Folios rattling about my 'Neck, till the Humanity of Mr. *Crab*, the Libra-'rian, diſintangled us.

'As I always held it neceſſary to read in publick 'Places, by way of Oſtentation, but could not 'poſſibly travel with a Library in my Pockets, I took 'the following Method to gratifie this Errantry of 'mine. I contrived a little Pocket Book, each Leaf 'of which was a different Author, ſo that my wan-'dring was indulged and concealed within the ſame 'Incloſure.

'This extravagant Humour, which ſhould ſeem to 'pronounce me irrecoverable, had the contrary Ef-'fect; and my Hand and Eye being thus confined to 'a ſingle Book, in a little time reconciled me to the 'peruſal of a ſingle Author. However I choſe ſuch a 'one as had as little Connexion as poſſible, turning 'to the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, where the beſt In-'ſtructions are thrown together in the moſt beautiful 'range imaginable, and where I found all that Varie-'ty which I had before ſought in ſo many different Au-'thors, and which was ſo neceſſary to beguile my At-'tention. By theſe proper Degrees, I have made ſo 'glorious a Reformation in my Studies, that I can 'keep Company with *Tully* in his moſt extended 'Periods, and work through the continued Nar-'rations of the moſt Prolix Hiſtorian. I now read 'nothing without making exact Collections, and 'ſhall ſhortly give the World an Inſtance of this in the 'Publication of the following Diſcourſes. The firſt 'is a learned Controverſie about the Exiſtence of 'Griffins, in which I hope to convince the World, 'that notwithſtanding ſuch a mixt Creature has been 'allowed by *Ælian*, *Solinus*, *Mela*, and *Herodotus*, 'that they have been perfectly miſtaken in that matter, 'and ſhall ſupport my ſelf by the Authority of *Al-'bertus*, *Pliny*, *Aldrovandus*, and *Matthias Miche-'vius*, which two laſt have clearly argued that Ani-'mal out of the Creation.

'The Second is a Treatiſe of Sternutation or 'Sneezing, with the original Cuſtom of ſaluting or 'bleſſing upon that Motion; as alſo with a Pro-'blem from *Ariſtotle*, ſhewing why Sneezing from 'Noon to Night was innocent enough, from 'Night to Noon extremely Unfortunate.

'The Third and moſt curious is my Diſcourſe up-'on the Nature of the Lake *Aſphaltites*, or the Lake 'of *Sodom*, being a very careful Inquiry whe-'ther Brickbats and Iron will ſwim in that Lake and 'Feathers ſink, as *Pliny* and *Mandevil* have averr'd.

'The diſcuſſing theſe Difficulties without Per-'plexity or Prejudice, the Labour in collecting 'and collating Matters of this Nature, will, I 'hope, in a great Meaſure attone for the idle 'Hours I have trifled away in Matters of leſs Im-'portance.

I am, SIR,

Your Humble Servant.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

For SALE by the CANDLE,

On Friday the 22d Inſtant, at 5 a-Clock in the Afternoon, at Garraway's Coffee houſe in Exchange Ally in Cornhil (only one Hogſhead of Claret in a Lot) viz. 96 Hogſheads of Excellent new French Clarets, Margaux la Fill, deep, bright, ſtrong, freſh, and of the true Flavour, neat, an entire Parcel, imported directly from Bourdeaux, and landed the 15th Inſtant at Cuſtom-houſe Key, now in a Cellar in the Gateway of Cuſtom-houſe Key aforeſaid. To be ſeen and taſted to morrow all Day, and all Friday as above 'till the time of Sale. To be Sold by Tho. Tomkins Broker in Seething-lane in Tower ſtreet.

This Day is Publiſh'd,

Plato, of the Immortality of the Soul, mentioned in the Tragedy of Cato; tranſlated from the Greek; price 1 s. The 2nd Edition of a Practical Expoſition of the Beatitudes, in 12mo, by James Gardener, A. M. Sub Dean of Lincoln. Du Pin's Abridgment of the Hiſtory of the Church, in 4 Vols. 12mo, with a compleat Chronological Table to the Whole. Pr. 12 s. The true Faith of a Chriſtian, in a very ſhort Abridgment of Bp. Pearſon on the Creed, by the Rev. Mr. Lambe. Mr. Kennedy's Opthalmographia; or, A Treatiſe of all the Diſeaſes incident to the Eye and Ear. All Printed for Bernard Lintott, between the two Temple-Gates; and on Thurſday will be publiſh'd, The Wife of Bath, a Comedy, written by Mr. Gay. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Juſt Publiſhed,

England's Intereſt conſidered in the Increaſe of the Trade of this Kingdom; in which is an Account of our Commerce with the ſeveral Nations in Europe. As alſo of the Advantages and Diſadvantages we receive from each Nation, pr. 6 d. Sold by J. Baker in Peter-noſter-Row. Where may be had the Lives of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy, pr. 4 s. What has been may be, &c. with the Tryal of the ſeven Biſhops, price 1 s. More Memoirs; or, the Pretender what he really pretends to be &c. price 6 d. The Grounds of Great Britain, pr. 1 s.

Whereas there remain ſeveral extraordinary fine things belonging to the Widow of the late famous Sculptor Mr. John Noſt, viz. fine Raiſed Marble Tables, Marble Chimney Pieces, Figures, &c. the deſigning to go beyond Sea, will diſpoſe of them at reaſonable Rates, at her Houſe near Hide Park; where Attendance will be daily given.

Lambeth Wells.

This is to acquaint all Gentlemen, Ladies and others, that there will be a Holland Smock run for by three Maids, five times round the Walks, on Thurſday the 21ſt Inſtant; where will be good Entertainment, with Muſick and Dancing, all the Summer.

LONDON: Printed for *J. Tonſon* in the *Strand*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in. 1713.